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ABSTRACT

Several methods of qualifying for enrollment in English 1A (Freshman English and Composition) at Reedley College exist: among them, a grade of C or better in English A (Remedial English), teacher recommendation in English 50 (a course for students not intending to transfer), SAT Verbal score of 466 or higher, ACT score of 20 or higher on the English or Composite section, a writing sample test administered and evaluated by the college English department, or grades of A or B in at least two years' work in high school English courses. A study was conducted to determine if any differences in academic performance in English 1A were associated with the method used by students to qualify for enrollment in the course. Subjects were students enrolled in English 1A during fall 1976. Results of the study indicated that there were no significant differences in performance in English 1A based on method of student qualification for enrollment except in the cases of students who qualified by taking English A, less than half of whom successfully completed English 1A. It was recommended that a closer look be taken at using English A as a qualifier for English 1A, and some modifications in the criteria for using English A as a qualifier were suggested. (JDS)

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COMPARISON OF ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH 1A

ACCORDING TO METHODS OF QUALIFYING FOR ENGLISH 1A

REEDLEY COLLEGE

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February 17, 1977

JC 770 141

DEFINITIONS OF BEGINNING ENGLISH COURSES AT REEDLEY COLLEGE

1. English 1A - Regular Freshman English and Composition.

2. English A - Remedial English; meets three hours per week.

3. English 50 - English for students not intending to transfer; meets five hours per week and is a laboratory class.

If the student does not qualify for English 1A, it is his decision whether to take English A or English 50.

METHODS OF QUALIFYING FOR ENGLISH 1A AT REEDLEY COLLEGE

1. Grade of C or better in English A.

2. Teacher recommendation in English 50.

3. SAT verbal score of 466 or higher, or ACT score of 20 or higher on the English or Composite section.

4. A writing sample test administered and evaluated by the Reedley College English department.

5. Grades of B or A in at least two years' work (10th, 11th, 12th grades) in high school English courses.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There are several different ways used to qualify students for English 1A. The question arises as to whether there is any difference in the achievement of students in English 1A who qualify by the several different means, and if there is a difference, whether such difference is significant.

METHODOLOGY

Rosters of English 1A teachers for the fall, 1976, semester were photo-copied, and means of qualifying for English 1A were recorded on the copies. At the end of the semester, the final grades written by the instructors were recorded on the copies. Chi-square was used to determine significance of differences on the 5% level of confidence and one degree of freedom. Comparisons were made between those satisfactorily completing the course (grades A, B, C, D) and those who did not satisfactorily complete the course (grades I, F, W, W'). The chi-square comparative index is 5.412. The null hypothesis is assumed.

FINDINGS

TABLE 1

	Engl A	Engl 50	Totals	
S	33	7	30	
U	36	2	38	Chi-square = 3.81
Totals	69	9	78	Since 3.81 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 2

	Engl A	Tests	Totals	
S	33	39	72	
U	36	4	40	Chi-square = 21.207
Totals	69	43	112	Since 21.207 is $>$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE 3

	Engl A	HS Grades	Totals	
S	33	76	109	
U	36	19	55	Chi-square = 18.56
Totals	69	95	164	Since 18.56 is $>$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE 4

	Engl A	Writ Samp	Totals	
S	33	13	46	
U	36	4	40	Chi-square = 4.498
Totals	69	17	86	Since 4.498 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 5

	Engl A	Not Qual	Totals	
S	33	2	35	
U	36	3	39	Chi=square = 0.114
Totals	69	5	74	Since 0.114 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 6

	Engl 50	Tests	Totals	
S	7	39	46	
U	2	4	6	Chi-square = 1.217
Totals	9	43	52	Since 1.217 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 7

	Engl 50	HS Grades	Totals	
S	7	76	83	
U	2	19	21	Chi-square = 0.025
Totals	9	95	104	Since 0.025 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 8

	Engl 50	Writ Samp	Totals	
S	7	13	20	
U	2	4	6	Chi-square = 0.005
Totals	9	17	26	Since 0.005 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Table 9

	Engl 50	Not Qual	Totals	
S	7	2	9	
U	2	3	5	Chi-square = 1.998
Totals	9	5	14	Since 1.998 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 10

	Tests	HS Grades	Totals	
S	39	76	115	
U	4	19	23	Chi-square = 2.439
Totals	43	95	138	Since 2.439 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 11

	Tests	Writ Samp	Totals	
S	39	13	52	
U	4	4	8	Chi-square = 2.13
Totals	43	17	60	Since 2.13 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 12

	Tests	Not Qual	Totals	
S	39	2	41	
U	4	3	7	Chi-square = 9.242
Totals	43	5	48	Since 9.242 is $>$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE 13

	HS Grades	Writ Samp	Totals	
S	76	13	89	
U	19	4	23	Chi-square = 0.110
Totals	95	17	112	Since 0.110 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 14

	HS Grades	Not Qual	Totals	
S	76	2	78	
U	19	3	22	Chi-square = 4.428
Totals	95	5	100	Since 4.428 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 15

	Writ Samp	Not Qual	Totals	
S	13	2	15	
U	4	3	7	Chi-square = 2.368
Totals	17	5	22	Since 2.368 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 16

COMPARING STUDENTS WHO QUALIFIED FOR ENGLISH 1A BY HIGH SCHOOL GRADES BY HIGH SCHOOLS

GPA in Engl 1A	High School	Number	
3.0	A	3	
3.0	B	2	
2.4	C	24	
2.0	D	16	Students who failed to complete (grad: I, F, W, W') were all counted in these GPA comparisons.
1.75	E	4	
1.73	F	15	
1.73	G	15	
1.5	H	2	
1.5	I	2	
0.0	J	3	

HIGH SCHOOLS WITH ONLY ONE STUDENT

3.0	K
3.0	L
3.0	M
3.0	N
2.0	O
1.0	P
0.0	Q
0.0	R
0.0	S

TABLES 17 - 22

COMPARING SUCCESSFUL HIGH SCHOOL GRADE QUALIFIERS BY HIGH SCHOOL

	D	C	Totals	
S	12	23	35	
U	4	1	5	Chi-square = 3.809
Totals	16	24	40	Since 3.809 is $<$ 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 18

	D	G	Totals	
S	12	11	23	
U	4	4	8	Chi-square = 0.011
Totals	16	15	31	Since 0.011 is < 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 19

	D	F	Totals	
S	12	11	23	
U	4	4	8	Chi-square = 0.011
Totals	16	15	31	Since 0.011 is < 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 20

	C	G	Totals	
S	23	11	34	
J	1	4	5	Chi-square = 4.18
Totals	24	15	39	Since 0.011 is < 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 21

	C	F	Totals	
S	23	11	34	
U	1	4	5	Chi-square = 4.18
Totals	24	15	39	Since 4.18 is < 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

TABLE 22

	G	F	Totals	
S	11	11	22	
U	4	4	8	Chi-square = 0.0
Totals	15	15	30	Since 0.0 is < 5.412 the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Tables 1 through 15 compare the achievement in English 1A according to the different ways of qualifying for English 1A. The null hypothesis, the assumption that there are no significant differences, was upheld in all but three of the comparisons. In Table 2 which compared English 1A achievement between those who qualified by taking English A and those who qualified by ACT or SAT scores, the English A students were less successful, and significantly so. Table 3, which compared English A qualifiers with high school grade qualifiers, shows less success for English A students on a significant level. In Table 12 which compares achievement in English 1A between test qualifiers and those who didn't qualify there is a significant difference in favor of those who qualified by test scores. In all other comparison the differences were not significant.

This tells us what we already knew - that students who were poor English students and had to take English A to qualify ended up being poor English students. It is evident in the data that less than half of the English A qualifiers satisfactorily completed English 1A. This should not be held against English A instructors - it is extremely difficult to change thinking habits and communication habits developed over 18 or more years in 54 hours of class. It is interesting that the small number of English 50 qualifiers fared better than the English A qualifiers. Perhaps the judgment of the English 50 instructors was more valid in recommending for English 1A than the C grade in English A. The N in English 50 is uncomfortably low, however.

Tables 16 through 22 compare achievement in English 1A by high school of students who qualify with high school grades. Of greatest interest are the four high schools with a large enough N to compare - C, D, F, and G. In comparing grade point average in English 1A, C was considerably higher than the other three. Using chi-square in comparing successful completions, however, (Tables 17 - 22) the differences were not significant.

In summary, qualifiers by English 50, by test scores, by high school grades, and by the writing sample, achieved at about the same rate. Those who did not achieve as well were the English A qualifiers. Perhaps a closer look should be taken at English A and the grade for qualification, or perhaps teacher recommendation should be considered. Two of the qualifying categories had such low numbers (N) that those comparisons should be redone in a semester when the N is higher. Such categories are English 50 and non-qualifiers.

A second series of comparisons were made using satisfactory completion grades of A, B, C, and unsatisfactory completion grades of D, I, F, W, W'. The previous rejections of the null hypothesis were upheld (Tables 2, 3, and 12), and four more rejections were added (Table 4, English A lower than the Writing Sample; Table 10, High School grades lower than Test Scores; Table 20, High School C higher than High School G; and Table 21, High School C higher than High School F). In all other cases the null hypothesis was upheld.

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